

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A process for preparing an unsaturated carboxylic acid anhydride, comprising:

reacting an unsaturated carboxylic acid and a lower aliphatic carboxylic acid anhydride in the presence of:

a catalyst wherein said catalyst comprises a metal salt and said metal salt comprises an anionic organic compound which has at least one carboxyl group; and

a stabilizer.

Claim 2 (cancelled): The process according to claim 1, wherein said catalyst comprises a metal salt.

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Claim 3 (currently amended): The process according to claim 1, wherein said catalyst ~~comprises a metal salt and said metal salt~~ comprises at least one cation selected from the group consisting of Cr, Zn, Cu, Ca, Zr, Ti, Na, La, Hf, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 4 (cancelled)

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein said catalyst comprises a metal salt and said metal salt comprises an anionic organic compound which has at least one group selected from the group consisting of carboxylic acid, dicarboxylic acid, beta-ketocarboxylic acid, beta-diketone and mixtures thereof.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein said catalyst is selected from the group consisting of chromium acetate, zirconium acetylacetone, titanium acetylacetone and mixtures thereof.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein the unsaturated carboxylic acid anhydride is methacrylic anhydride.

Claim 8 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein the lower aliphatic carboxylic acid anhydride is acetic acid anhydride.

Claim 9. (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein the unsaturated carboxylic acid is methacrylic acid.

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*cont'd*

Claim 10 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein the stabilizer is selected from the group consisting of hydroquinone, hydroquinone monomethyl ether, topanol O, topanol A, phenothiazine, N,N'-diphenyl-p-phenylene diamine, and a mixture thereof.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, further comprising distilling the unsaturated carboxylic acid anhydride.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, further comprising separating the catalyst from the unsaturated carboxylic acid anhydride.

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein a molar ratio of the carboxylic acid anhydride to the unsaturated carboxylic acid ranges from 0.5 to 1.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein a molar ratio of the carboxylic acid anhydride to the unsaturated carboxylic acid ranges from 0.55 to 0.65.

Claim 15 (Previously Presented): A process for preparing methacrylic anhydride, comprising:

reacting methacrylic acid and acetic anhydride in the presence of:  
a catalyst; and  
a stabilizer.

*A2*  
Claim 16 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 15, wherein said catalyst comprises a metal salt and said metal salt comprises at least one cation selected from the group consisting of Cr, Zn, Cu, Ca, Zr, Ti, Na, La, Hf, and mixtures thereof.

*CONT'D*  
Claim 17 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 15, wherein said catalyst comprises a metal salt and said metal salt comprises an anionic organic compound which has at least one carboxyl group.

Claim 18 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 15, wherein said catalyst comprises a metal salt and said metal salt comprises an anionic organic compound which has at least one group selected from the group consisting of carboxylic acid, dicarboxylic acid, beta-ketocarboxylic acid, beta-diketone and mixtures thereof.

Claim 19 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 15, wherein said catalyst is selected from the group consisting of chromium acetate, zirconium acetylacetone, titanium acetylacetone and mixtures thereof.

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Claim 20 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 15, wherein the stabilizer is selected from the group consisting of hydroquinone, hydroquinone monomethyl ether, topanol O, topanol A, phenothiazine, N,N'-diphenyl-p-phenylene diamine, and a mixture thereof.